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.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^{p}	preliminary
^{r}	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E}	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published
*	significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

The evolution of English–French bilingualism in Canada from 1961 to 2011

by Jean-François Lepage and Jean-Pierre Corbeil

Overview of the study

Fifty years ago, the initial work of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism laid the foundation for what would become the Government of Canada's policy of official bilingualism. In the years following the commission, the rate of English–French bilingualism in Canada increased, but seemingly reached a plateau in 2001. What are the bilingualism trends in Canada? What factors are behind the recent slowdown in bilingualism across the country?

- In 2011, 17.5% of Canadians, or 5.8 million people, reported being able to conduct a conversation in both English and French, up from the 12.2% recorded 50 years earlier, in 1961.
- In Canada, the proportion of bilingual people went from 17.7% to 17.5% between 2001 and 2011, even though the number of bilingual people rose continuously.
- Quebec was the only province in which the rate of bilingualism rose steadily between 2001 and 2011—from 40.8% to 42.6%. In 1961, the rate was 25.5%.
- In the rest of Canada, the rate of bilingualism went from 10.3% in 2001 to 9.7% in 2011. In 1961, the rate was 6.9%.
- Between 2001 and 2011, the lack of growth in bilingualism outside Quebec occurred as the non-Francophone immigrant population was growing and the proportion of students in French-as-a-second-language (FSL) programs was shrinking.

Introduction

In October 2012, Statistics Canada released language data from the 2011 Census, including findings on Canadians' knowledge of official languages. Although the data have been collected in different ways over the years, the Government of Canada has been collecting data on the ability to conduct a conversation in both English and French since 1901. Thanks to successive censuses, statistics on the rate of bilingualism[1] have a long history in Canada.

In the early 1960s, new interest in bilingualism was sparked by the work of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (also known as the Laurendeau–Dunton Commission, named after its two co-chairs).[2] The work of the commission, whose 50th anniversary is being celebrated this year, led to the adoption of the first *Official Languages Act* in 1969. This act gave statutory recognition to Canada's linguistic duality, but stopped short of setting specific national objectives for bilingualism.[3]

At the time, the Laurendeau–Dunton Commission recognized that affirming Canada's bilingual nature did not necessarily go hand-in-hand with a bilingual population. The focus was instead on developing bilingual institutions, so that "the principal public and private institutions [can] provide services in two languages to citizens, the vast majority of whom may very well be unilingual."[4] Nevertheless, since institutional bilingualism requires a sufficient number of bilingual people to "maintain contact between the two language groups," the Commission also had a mandate to "recommend what could be done to enable Canadians to become bilingual."[5]

In Canada, the rate of bilingualism went from 12.2% in 1961 to 13.4% in 1971. It continued to increase over the next three decades, reaching 17.7% in 2001. However, in the last 10 years, the rate of bilingualism in Canada's population decreased slightly for the first time since 1961, to 17.5% in 2011. Note, however, that the number of bilingual people in Canada has never stopped growing.

What is the reason for the relative stagnation of the bilingualism rate, when the number of bilingual people in Canada is increasing?[6] This article presents the historical trends in bilingualism in Canada using the censuses from 1961 to 2011. It then examines some key factors that may explain the recent stability of the bilingualism rate, namely second-language learning and international immigration, using data from the Elementary–Secondary Education Survey (ESES), censuses, and the National Household Survey (NHS) (see *Data sources, methods and definitions*).

There were 5.8 million bilingual people in Canada in 2011

In the 2011 Census, 5.8 million people nationwide reported being able to conduct a conversation in both English and French, which corresponds to a bilingualism rate of 17.5%. In 1961, the percentage was 12.2%, when 2.2 million Canadians reported being able to speak both official languages. This increase in the number of bilingual people over the last 50 years (close to 3.6 million people) corresponds to a growth rate of close to 160%. During this period, Canada's population increased by 82%, from 18.2 million to 33.1 million.[7]

In the last few years, however, growth in the bilingualism rate has slowed, decreasing slightly between 2001 and 2011, after four decades of steady growth (Table 1).

However, the results differ between provinces. In some provinces, namely New Brunswick, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, the results follow the national trend, increasing between 1961 and 2001 and then remaining stable between 2001 and 2011. In other provinces, namely Manitoba and Saskatchewan,

Table 1 Constant increase in number of bilingual people since 1961, but slight decrease in rate of bilingualism between 2001 and 2011

	1961[1]		2001		2011	
	thousands	%	thousands	%	thousands	%
Canada	**2,231.2**	**12.2**	**5,231.6**	**17.7**	**5,795.6**	**17.5**
Newfoundland and Labrador	5.3	1.2	20.9	4.1	23.5	4.6
Prince Edward Island	7.9	7.6	16.0	12.0	17.0	12.3
Nova Scotia	45.0	6.1	90.3	10.1	93.4	10.3
New Brunswick	113.5	19.0	245.9	34.2	245.9	33.2
Quebec	1,338.9	25.5	2,907.7	40.8	3,328.7	42.6
Ontario	493.3	7.9	1,319.7	11.7	1,395.8	11.0
Manitoba	68.4	7.4	102.8	9.3	103.1	8.6
Saskatchewan	42.1	4.5	49.0	5.1	46.6	4.6
Alberta	56.9	4.3	202.9	6.9	235.6	6.5
British Columbia	57.5	3.5	269.4	7.0	296.7	6.8
Yukon	0.8	5.6	2.9	10.2	4.4	13.1
Northwest Territories including Nunavut	1.6	7.0	4.1	6.5	4.9	6.8
Northwest Territories	..	..	3.1	8.4	3.7	9.1
Nunavut	..	..	1.0	3.8	1.2	3.8
Canada excluding Quebec	892.3	6.9	2,323.9	10.3	2,466.8	9.7

Note: To access the data for 1971, 1981 and 1991, see appendix Table A.1.

1. In 1961, the answers to the bilingualism question were collected differently—by census agents rather than by self-enumeration. The questions were also worded differently (see *Data sources, methods and definitions*). However, the question options have remained unchanged from one census to the next.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1961, 2001 and 2011.

the rate of bilingualism did not clearly increase or decrease between 1961 and 2001, but decreased between 2001 and 2011. In Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island[8] and Nova Scotia, the rate grew steadily between 1961 and 2011, but the growth was slower between 2001 and 2011. Only in Quebec was there relatively steady growth in the rate of bilingualism in each period from 1961 to 2011.

Even though the number of bilingual people—like the total population—has not stopped growing from one decennial census to the next, it has not always grown at the same pace as the total population (Chart 1). At the beginning of the period, the bilingual population grew at a much more rapid rate than the total population. For example, between 1961 and 1971, the bilingual population increased by 30%, while the total population grew by 18%. In contrast, the total population grew more quickly than the bilingual population between 2001 and 2011, a period with high levels of international immigration.

This trend was particularly pronounced outside Quebec. Between 1961 and 1981, the growth rate of the bilingual population was nearly twice that of the total population. The gap gradually narrowed over the decades that followed and the trend reversed itself in the last 10 years—the growth rate of the total population (12%) has been twice that of the bilingual population (6%). In Quebec, however, the growth rate of the bilingual population has always been greater than that of the total population.[9]

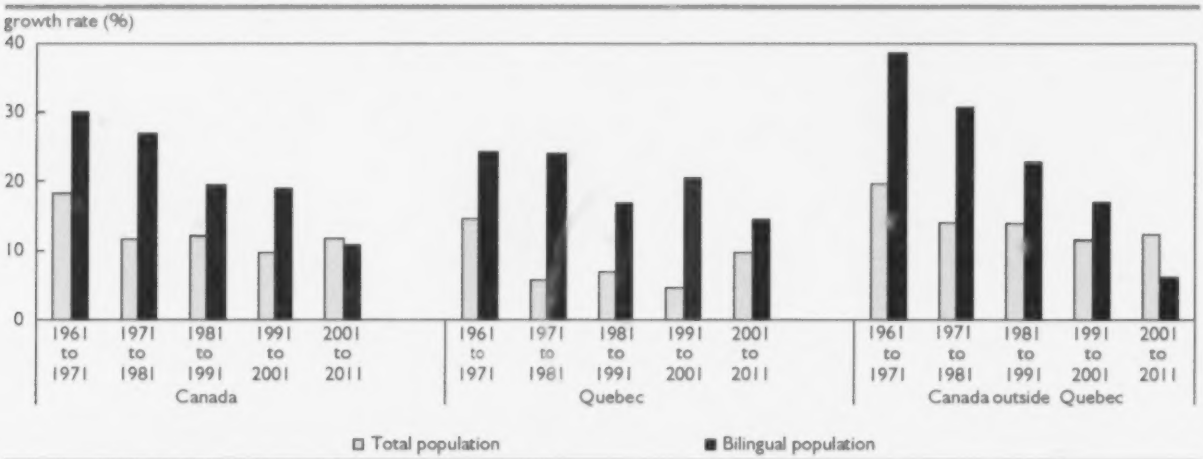
In recent years, the dynamics of bilingualism in Quebec have therefore differed from that in the rest of Canada, as reflected in its bilingualism rate of nearly 43% in 2011. The only other province with a rate greater than the national rate was New Brunswick (33%). In contrast, the three westernmost provinces, as well as Newfoundland and Labrador, had the lowest rates of bilingualism (less than 7%).

In 2011, more than 80% of Canada's bilingual population was living in Quebec or Ontario, although the two provinces were home to 62% of Canada's total population. The number of people able to speak both languages was 3.3 million in Quebec (57% of Canada's bilingual population) and approximately 1.4 million in Ontario (24% of Canada's bilingual population). New Brunswick had 246,000 bilingual people, therefore, 86% of Canada's bilingual population was living in one of those three provinces in 2011.

These findings show that bilingualism continues to be concentrated in the 'bilingual belt,'[10] which is an area of frequent contact between Anglophones and Francophones that includes parts of Quebec and the parts of Ontario and New Brunswick that border Quebec.

The concentration of the bilingual population is not a recent phenomenon. In 1961, 87% of Canada's bilingual population lived in Quebec, Ontario or New Brunswick and, in every decennial census year,

Chart 1 Significant and constant decrease in rate of bilingual population growth outside Quebec between 1961 and 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011.

55% to 60% of bilingual Canadians were living in Quebec (57% in 2011).

What is the reason for this distinctive feature of Quebec? It is primarily because Francophones, most of whom live in Quebec, have a higher rate of bilingualism than Anglophones,[11] but also because Quebec Anglophones have a higher rate of bilingualism, as official-language minorities (Francophones outside Quebec and Anglophones in Quebec) are more bilingual than the majority.[12]

Across Canada, the rate of bilingualism in 2011 was 44% for Francophones, compared with 8% for Anglophones. As for official-language minorities, Anglophones in Quebec had a bilingualism rate of 61% (compared with 6% for Anglophones in the rest of Canada), while Francophones outside Quebec had a bilingualism rate of 87% (compared with 38% for Francophones in Quebec).

Outside Quebec, the growth in bilingualism slowed down as a result of two factors determining the evolution of bilingualism: (1) a recent drop in enrolment in French-as-a-second-language (FSL) courses in public schools; and (2) the share of international immigration in the growth of the population.

Enrolment increasing in French immersion programs, but decreasing in regular FSL programs

The first factor that may have affected the evolution of bilingualism outside Quebec is students' level of exposure to FSL programs.

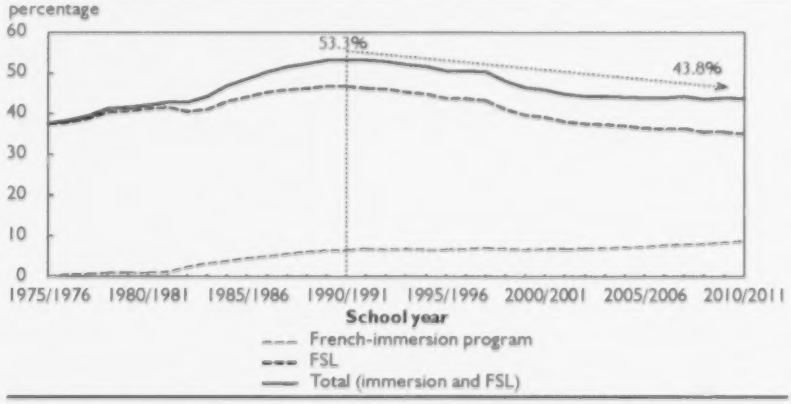
In the 1970s and 1980s, enrolment in French-immersion and regular FSL programs in public English-language schools outside Quebec increased significantly (Chart 2). For example, close to 260 schools offered a French-immersion program in the 1976/1977 school year, and that number reached close to 1,800 in 1991/1992. Over the same period, enrolment rose from 23,000 to more than 267,000 for French-immersion programs, and from 1.5 million to 1.8 million for regular FSL programs.

However, while public-school enrolment in French-immersion programs continued to rise after 1991/1992, totalling more than 341,000 in 2010/2011, enrolment in regular FSL programs fell by 432,000, to a total of 1.4 million. In other words, the number of French-immersion students went up 28%, and the number of regular FSL students went down 24%. The total percentage of young Canadians in public primary or secondary schools outside Quebec who were exposed to FSL programs went from 53% to 44%.

At the same time, young Anglophones outside Quebec are gradually becoming less bilingual. In the 1996 Census, 15% of 15- to 19-year-olds whose first official language spoken was English could conduct a conversation in both of Canada's official languages (Chart 3). That percentage fell to 14% in 2001, 12% in 2006 and 11% in 2011. Moreover, many Anglophones outside Quebec do not retain their bilingualism as they grow older. For example, take the 15- to 19-year-old Anglophones outside Quebec in 1996, whose rate of bilingualism was 15%—their rate of bilingualism five years later (when they were 20 to 24) had dropped to 12%. Ten years later (in 2006, when they were 25 to 29) their rate was 10%, and 15 years later (in 2011, when they were 30 to 34) it was 8%.[13]

Another way to show the link between bilingualism and years at school is to look at the rate of bilingualism by age. Among Anglophones outside Quebec,

Chart 2 Continuous increase in French-immersion program registrations despite a decrease in French-as-a-second-language (FSL) instruction since 1991/1992[1]



1. Elementary and secondary public-school students in all provinces except Quebec.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Elementary/Secondary School Enrolment Survey, 1975/1976 to 1999/2000; Elementary–Secondary Education Survey, 2000/2001 to 2010/2011.

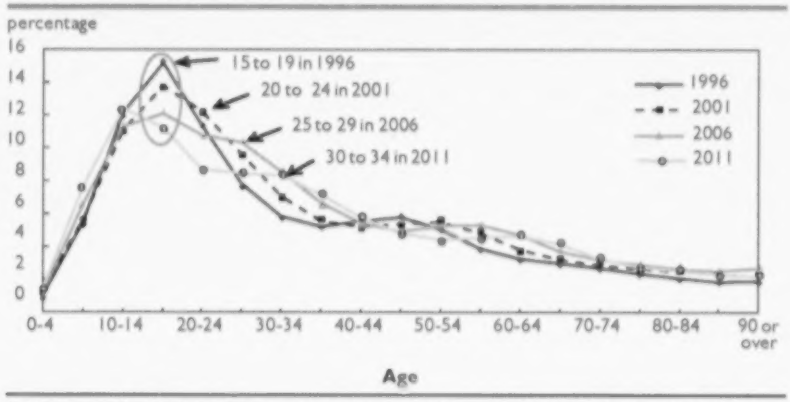
young people age 10 to 19 had the highest bilingualism rates and those rates decreased among older people (Chart 4).

For Francophones in Quebec, the rate of bilingualism peaks when they are in their twenties. This is an overall reflection of two different second-language learning modes. Many Francophones in Quebec improve their knowledge of English after completing their full-time studies. Therefore, bilingualism among Quebec Francophones peaks between the ages of 20 and 30, and remains higher in subsequent age groups.

As might be expected, Francophone and Anglophone minority communities are more bilingual. The rate of bilingualism for Francophones outside Quebec exceeds 80% among those age 20 and over. The rate of bilingualism among Anglophones in Quebec exceeds 70% at a young age and remains quite high during the working years, however, it declines when older ages are reached—especially after retirement age (65).

These trends mask differences resulting from other characteristics that can be significant, for instance, differences between men and women (see *A few characteristics of bilingual people in Canada*). In fact, among Anglophones outside Quebec, the rate of bilingualism was greater in women than in men. For example, for young Anglophones age 10 to 19, the rate of bilingualism was 4 to 5 percentage points higher in girls than in boys.[14] Among Anglophones and Francophones in Quebec and Francophones outside Quebec, men had a greater rate of bilingualism than women. Among Francophone men over 30 in Quebec, the rate was 10 percentage points higher.[15]

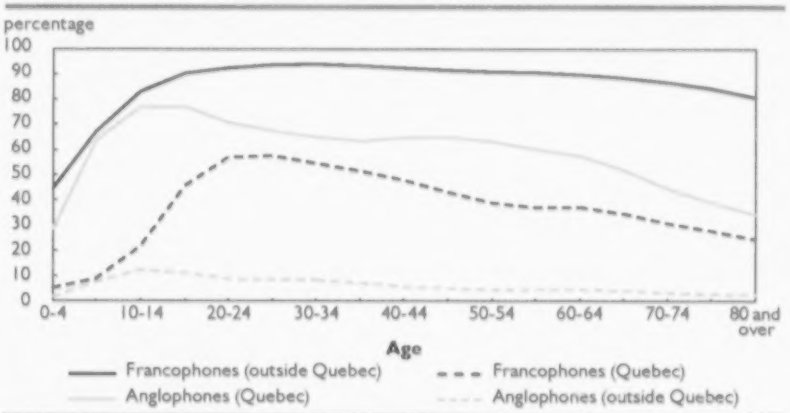
Chart 3 Among Anglophones outside Quebec, the highest rates of bilingualism are seen between age 10 and 19[1]



1. Findings for the 1996 to 2006 censuses are based on 20% sample data while findings for the 2011 Census are based on 100% data.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011.

Chart 4 Bilingualism peaks during school years among Anglophones



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2011.

Low rate of bilingualism among immigrants outside Quebec

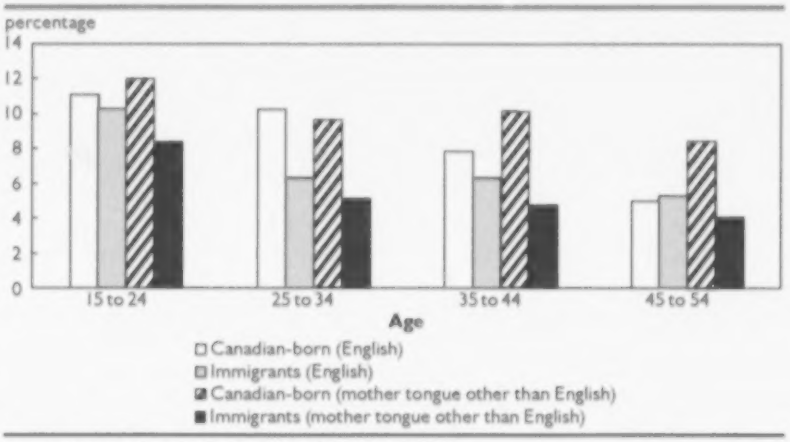
The other major factor that may affect bilingualism trends is international immigration. Immigrants are now the main factor behind population growth in Canada,[16] and more than 80% of immigrants have neither English nor French as their mother tongue, which has a direct impact on the evolution of English–French bilingualism in Canada.

Across Canada in 2011, the rate of English–French bilingualism among immigrants (13%) was less than that of the Canadian-born (19%). However, the situation in Quebec is not the same as in the rest of Canada.

In Quebec, the rate of bilingualism among immigrants (51%) is greater than that of the Canadian-born (42%). In fact, immigrants living in Quebec whose mother tongue is neither English nor French are often trilingual.

In contrast, outside Quebec, 6% of immigrants reported being able to conduct a conversation in both official languages in 2011, compared with 11% of the Canadian-born. In addition, among people whose mother tongue is English or a language other than English or French, immigrants in all age groups have lower rates of bilingualism than the Canadian-born, except among people age 45 to 54 whose mother tongue is English (Chart 5).

Chart 5 Outside Quebec, the rates of bilingualism are generally lower among immigrants whose mother tongue is not English



Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011.

Each year, Canada accepts approximately 250,000 new immigrants (close to 200,000 of whom settle outside Quebec).[17] Therefore, although the rate of bilingualism among immigrants outside Quebec has remained steady at approximately 6% since 1981,[18] the growing proportion of non-bilingual immigrants within the total population contributed to a decline in the overall rate of bilingualism.

Hence, in 1981, immigrants represented 19% of the non-bilingual population outside Quebec. In 2011, the proportion was 24%.

In Quebec, it was the reverse—the growing proportion of immigrants in the population pushes bilingualism higher, since their rate of bilingualism is increasing (from 43% in 1981 to 51% in 2011). However, since Quebec has accepted fewer immigrants than its share of the total population in Canada,[19] the increase in bilingualism among Quebec immigrants since 1981 has not offset the increase in non-bilingual immigrants outside Quebec during this period.

Conclusion

The rate of bilingualism as determined using census data is a useful indicator for tracking the evolution of English–French bilingualism in Canada. Although the number of bilingual people in Canada has never stopped increasing over the last 50 years, the rate of bilingualism has dropped slightly in the 10 years preceding the last census. These two apparently contradictory trends are largely the result of reduced exposure to French among Anglophone students outside Quebec, difficulties to retain some knowledge of French, and an increase in the number of immigrants outside Quebec who cannot converse in both official languages.

Bilingualism has never stopped increasing in Quebec so that, when it comes to bilingualism, there are significant differences between Quebec, the only province with a Francophone majority, and the other provinces and the territories. Immigrants in Quebec are more likely to be bilingual, and thus contribute to the increase in bilingualism in the province. Francophones and Anglophones in Quebec are also more likely to remain bilingual over the life cycle, a trend that shows the importance of second-language exposure as a factor behind the retention of bilingualism.

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Data sources, methods and definitions

The data used for this article are based on the 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011 Census of Population, the Elementary / Secondary School Enrolment (ESSE) survey, the Elementary–Secondary Education Survey (ESES), and the National Household Survey (NHS).

The 2011 Census data were collected using a census questionnaire distributed to 100% of the population. The data from earlier censuses were collected using the long-form census questionnaire distributed to 20% of the population (except in 1971, when it was distributed to 33% of the population).

The ESES is a national survey that enables Statistics Canada to provide information on enrolments, graduates, educators and financial statistics of Canadian elementary and secondary public and private educational institutions.

The ESSE collected data on enrolment by type of school (public, private, schools for the visually and hearing impaired, and federal and Department of National Defence schools). This survey was discontinued after the 1999/2000 reference year. The data are now collected via the ESES. Since data on private institutions are available in the survey only from 2010/2011 onward, only data on public institutions were used for comparisons over time in this article.

The NHS collects social and economic information that communities need to plan services such as child care, schooling, family services, housing, roads and public transportation, and skills training for employment. In 2011, approximately 4.5 million households across Canada received the NHS questionnaire. Participation in the survey was voluntary. In this article, comparisons have been made between the NHS and earlier censuses, only for the purpose of comparing the rates of bilingualism between immigrants and the Canadian-born at the aggregate level.

Definitions

Bilingualism: Indicates whether the respondent has reported being able to conduct a conversation in English and French in response to the question on knowledge of official languages. In this article, bilingualism refers only to English–French bilingualism.

In the 2011 Census, the question on knowledge of English and French was: "Can you speak English or French well enough to conduct a conversation?" The possible responses were "English only," "French only," "Both English and French," and "Neither English nor French." This question has remained unchanged since the 1971 Census.

In earlier censuses (1961 and earlier) enumerators visited the households of Canadians and asked the following two questions: "Can you speak English? French?" The possible responses were the same as those in more recent censuses.

First official language spoken: This variable, which is used in this article to define the "Francophone" and "Anglophone" populations, was derived within the framework of the application of the *Official Languages Act*. The derivation method is described in the regulations concerning the use of official languages for the provision of public services. First it takes knowledge of the two official languages into account, second, mother tongue, and third, language spoken at home. The first official language spoken (FOLS) serves to allocate the Canadian population into the country's two main language groups. In Canada, just over 97% of the population has either English or French as its first official language spoken. The residual portion consists of people who have neither English nor French as their mother tongue or language spoken most often at home, and who cannot conduct a conversation in either of the two official languages (1.8%), as well as those who know both English and French, but who cannot be assigned to only one official language population on the basis of the three census variables used (1.1%).

Mother tongue: The language first learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census.

Regular French as a second language (FSL) program: Programs where French is taught in English schools as a subject in the regular course offerings. One or more additional subjects can also be taught in the student's second official language, but second-language instruction does not exceed 25% of all instruction time.

French-immersion program: Programs where French is the language of instruction in English schools for at least 25% of all instruction time.

Recent immigrants: People who immigrated during the five years preceding the 2011 Census or the 2011 National Household Survey.

A few characteristics of bilingual people in Canada

Overall, bilingual people are younger, more educated and slightly more likely to be male than female.

Age and bilingualism

In general, the highest rates of bilingualism are among 15- to 39-year-olds since this is the only age group with a bilingualism rate of over 20%. Therefore, nationally, bilingual people were slightly younger than non-bilingual people. In 2011, the median age of Canadians was 40, but the median age of bilingual people was 38.

However, there were some differences between the groups. For example, the median age of bilingual Anglophones was 31, compared with 42 for Francophones. The difference was more noticeable outside Quebec, where the median age of bilingual Anglophones was 29, while that of bilingual Francophones was 47.[1] The difference was less significant between Anglophones and Francophones in Quebec (the median age of bilingual Anglophones was 37 and that of bilingual Francophones was 41).

Sex and bilingualism

Nationally, the rate of bilingualism was 18% for males and 17% for females. However, the situation was different in Quebec than in the rest of Canada.

In Quebec, the rate of bilingualism was 42% for male Francophones and 35% for female Francophones. Male and female Anglophones in that province had a similar rate of bilingualism (61%).

Outside Quebec, the rate of bilingualism was 7% for female Anglophones, compared with 6% for male Anglophones. Conversely, among Francophones, the rate was 88% for men and 87% for women.

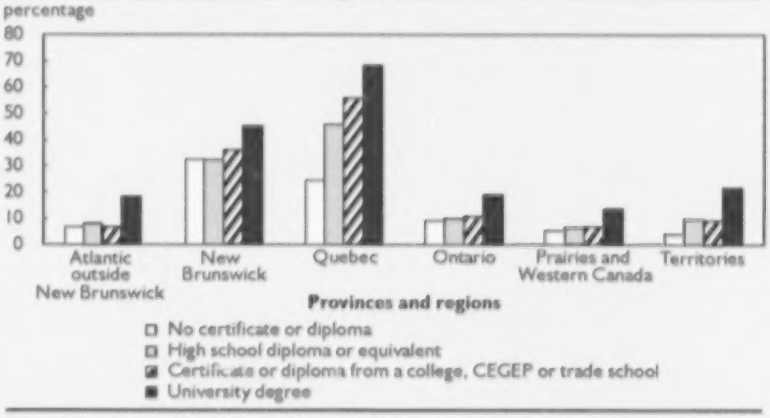
Education and bilingualism

According to data from the 2006 Census,[2] the link between educational attainment and bilingualism is different depending on whether a person is living in Quebec or outside Quebec (Chart A.1).

In Quebec, the rate of bilingualism in 2006 was 25% among those without a certificate or diploma, compared with 46% among those with a high school diploma, 55% among those with a college diploma, and 68% among those with a degree at or above the bachelor level.

In the other provinces, aside from the fact that those with a university degree at or above the bachelor level had a greater rate of bilingualism, differences in the rates of bilingualism were much smaller between the other levels of education .

Chart A.1 Rates of bilingualism are higher among university graduates



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

Notes

1. These results reflect the aging of the Francophone population outside Quebec, since these populations have a higher rate of bilingualism.
2. National Household Survey data on education will be officially released by Statistics Canada on June 26, 2013.

Notes

1. While many Canadians, mainly immigrants, can conduct a conversation in their mother tongue and in one of the two official languages, 'bilingualism' in this article refers to English–French bilingualism. The 'rate of bilingualism' is the percentage of the population of a given geographical unit—excluding institutional residents—that reports being able to conduct a conversation in both English and French.
2. The Commission's mandate was basically to "inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution" (see Canada 1967, Appendix I, p. 173).
3. See Jedwab 2011.
4. See Canada 1967 (p. xxviii, no. 29). Note that of the 18.2 million people enumerated in the 1961 Census, 12.3 million reported that they spoke English only, and 3.5 million, French only.
5. See Canada 1967 (p. xxviii, no. 30).
6. Although the scientific literature on bilingualism is vast, a statistical approach is seldom taken. The work of Vallee and de Vries (1978) and Grenier (1989), for example, by far predate the phenomenon under investigation. A more recent example, Jedwab (2011), does not deal with bilingualism from this particular angle.
7. Refers to the non-institutional Canadian population.
8. In Prince Edward Island, there was a slight decrease from 8.2% in 1971 to 8.1% in 1981.
9. The main reason for the wide gap between the two growth rates in Quebec between 1971 and 1981 is that the growth rate of Quebec's total population was much lower during that time as a result of negative net migration of the English mother-tongue population (approximately 160,000 people).
10. The term 'bilingual belt' was coined by Richard Joy (1967). According to Joy, the bilingual belt includes northern Ontario, the Ottawa Valley, Montréal, the Eastern Townships (Estrie) and the northern counties of New Brunswick.
11. For analysis purposes, Anglophones and Francophones are those whose first official language spoken is English and French, respectively.
12. Note that Francophones nationwide form the official-language minority.
13. Regarding the retention of French as a second language by Anglophones outside Quebec, Jedwab (2011, p. 163) found that "lack of exposure to the French language beyond the school years is responsible for declines in second-language knowledge." However, an article by Allen (2008) documents the effect of not only the type of learning program (regular FSL or immersion), but also the duration of French immersion on second-language retention. Allen states that not only are people who have studied in an immersion program more bilingual and able to retain their bilingualism longer than those who have not studied in such a program, but also that the second-language retention rate is linked to the number of school years spent in French immersion.
14. This difference can be explained by a greater enrolment of young girls in French-immersion programs. For example, in the 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 school years, 57% of French-immersion students were girls and 44% were boys.
15. One hypothesis explaining this difference is that there are more women in some professional fields that are more 'unilingual' (for example, in education and health).
16. See Statistics Canada 2012.
17. On average, between 1991 and 2011, close to 235,000 new immigrants came to Canada each year. As well, between 1991 and 2011, Canada's immigrant population went from 4.34 million to 6.78 million.
18. The rate of bilingualism among the immigrant population varies little, regardless of the date of immigration. That is, the rate of English–French bilingualism of recent immigrants is, generally, identical to that of immigrants who came to Canada 20 or 30 years ago.
19. In 2011, 14.4% of Canada's immigrant population lived in Quebec, while that province's demographic weight was 23.6%. However, the proportion of immigrants who are settling in Quebec is increasing.

Table A.1 Constant increase in number of bilingual people since 1961, but slight decrease in rate of bilingualism between 2001 and 2011

	1961[1]		1971		1981		1991		2001		2011	
	thousands	%	thousands	%	thousands	%	thousands	%	thousands	%	thousands	%
Canada	**2,231.2**	**12.2**	**2,900.2**	**13.4**	**3,682.0**	**15.3**	**4,398.7**	**16.3**	**5,231.6**	**17.7**	**5,795.6**	**17.5**
Newfoundland and Labrador	5.3	1.2	9.4	1.8	12.8	2.3	18.5	3.3	20.9	4.1	23.5	4.6
Prince Edward Island	7.9	7.6	9.1	8.2	9.8	8.1	13.0	10.1	16.0	12.0	17.0	12.3
Nova Scotia	45.0	6.1	53.0	6.7	62.4	7.4	76.5	8.6	90.3	10.1	93.4	10.3
New Brunswick	113.5	19.0	136.1	21.5	182.6	26.5	211.5	29.5	245.9	34.2	245.9	33.2
Quebec	1,338.9	25.5	1,663.8	27.6	2,065.1	32.4	2,413.0	35.4	2,907.7	40.8	3,328.7	42.6
Ontario	493.3	7.9	716.1	9.3	924.5	10.8	1,136.2	11.4	1,319.7	11.7	1,395.8	11.0
Manitoba	68.4	7.4	80.9	8.2	80.0	7.9	98.8	9.2	102.8	9.3	103.1	8.6
Saskatchewan	42.1	4.5	46.0	5.0	43.7	4.6	50.8	5.2	49.0	5.1	46.6	4.6
Alberta	56.9	4.3	81.0	5.0	142.5	6.4	167.2	6.6	202.9	6.9	235.6	6.5
British Columbia	57.5	3.5	101.4	4.6	154.2	5.7	207.2	6.4	269.4	7.0	296.7	6.8
Yukon	0.8	5.6	1.2	6.6	1.8	7.9	2.6	9.3	2.9	10.2	4.4	13.1
Northwest Territories including Nunavut	1.6	7.0	2.1	6.1	2.8	6.0	3.5	6.1	4.1	6.5	4.9	6.8
Northwest Territories	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3.1	8.4	3.7	9.1
Nunavut	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1.0	3.8	1.2	3.8
Canada excluding Quebec	892.3	6.9	1,236.4	8.0	1,616.9	9.1	1,985.7	9.8	2,323.9	10.3	2,466.8	9.7

1. In 1961, the answers to the bilingualism question were collected differently—by census agents rather than by self-enumeration. The questions were also worded differently (see *Data sources, methods and definitions*). However, the question options have remained unchanged from one census to the next.
Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011.

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